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Happy
Holidays
In India

Happy Holidays in India

At the Time of the Last Durbar

BY

M. E. FITCH

[Mrs. William¹/Grant Fitch]

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NO. 1

To My Dear Sons
This Book Is Inscribed



Salutation



IT WAS my good fortune on reaching Singapore, in the year 1902, for a journey through India, where the great Durbar was to be held, to find that our ship from Singapore to Rangoon, was the Tara, Captain Herrington.

Now the Tara was the ship, built by the British India Company for the royal, titled, and distinguished, visitors, who were to take part in the ceremonies, that proclaimed King Edward VII., Emperor of India.

The ship was a floating palace, and the officers were of the royal navy.

The ship was ordered to Rangoon, via Singapore to await the royal command, and, lucky traveller that I am, I was one of a small party to enjoy a week on this beautiful ship.

After my journey through India, and a three days' sail from Calcutta to Rangoon, imagine my delight to find that I would be transhipped to the Tara.

I had come from a plague country, and was not permitted to land in Burma, but I had thoroughly seen Rangoon, had visited Mandalay, had sailed on the Irrawaddy, "where the flying fishes play," so I was quite ready to continue my journey.

On my arrival at the ship, I was met by Captain Herrington, and welcomed as an old friend.

Everything was in regal style, no clumsy gang-plank, but a royal stairway was lowered.

Next morning after Captain Herrington had been ashore, he came to me saying, "I have news for you, which may be agreeable, and may not; I am ordered to sail at once, not to stop at Penang, so the passengers booked for that port will be obliged to take another ship."

"The Vice-regal party, are not ready to leave India, as they had planned, and there will be time for me to make a hasty voyage, and return for their commands; so with a full cargo, and some second class passengers, I am ordered to Singapore, and you and your companion will be my only first class passengers."

Could one's wildest dreams, picture such good fortune, for the whole ship was mine, with all its royal state. So during those peaceful days, as we quietly sailed upon the calm waters, these sketches were scribbled for my good friends.

M. E. F.



THE HOOGHLY

Hiring a Servant

AS OUR good ship entered the Hooghly (one of the many mouths of the Ganges) and slowly wended her way, twisting and turning, for miles up the treacherous stream to Calcutta, plans for my journey through India naturally had first place in my thought.

A good servant and guide must be secured. While I had my companion maid, who had served me well, still a native servant was indispensable.

I had always heard so much of the faithful Indian

servant, and last year at Ceylon in the hotel, as I saw them standing by their master's door, all day, and at night, removing their voluminous turban, rolling it up for a pillow, spreading a strip of cotton for their bed and lying down for the night to watch and guard their Sahib or Mem-Sahib, I fairly longed for the time when I, too, should have such a faithful guardian.

And now in the last days of 1902, as we were nearing Calcutta, how I reveled in the thought of the ideal servant, with his respectful salaam, and his ever watchful care. I pictured him with pure white turban of the largest size, and long white coat; the trousers I left to fate; only they must be short, leaving his feet and legs bare, to show his respect for me, as there is no greater disrespect in Oriental countries, than to cover the feet, or uncover the head; so the turban I must have, on my servant.

As the ship touched the Calcutta dock, she seemed to swarm with Indians, of all sorts and conditions, and the most unclean one of all, took me in charge.

How well I remember the huge green woolen "comforter" he wore around his neck, and the soiled cap! No turban on him!

We had a report of "no rooms to be had in Calcutta," so the captain advised leaving our luggage, and if we had difficulty in securing rooms, returning

to the ship for the night; so leaving my maid in charge of the luggage, I started with friends for the Grand hotel.

The soiled cap, and the green comforter, would not be dismissed, he secured a Garry, mounted the box beside the driver and when my friends stopped for letters, he put in my lap a big package of chits, or recommendations in which he was vouched for, as a perfect servant, I wonder, I did not fall a victim to his evil eye, and his persistency.

Finding plenty of rooms at the hotel, I sent my new servant as he had constituted himself, for the luggage, and when he arrived with it, he hustled the coolies, and ordered the servants about in a way to command my admiration, as he thought—ending with the pertinent question, “Am I engaged.”

To his seeming surprise I gave him the usual fee, and dismissed him—I could not lower my ideal so soon, and I must have a turban.

The hotel was excellent, but servants! If I opened my door, two or three men would spring from the floor, and try to press their package of chits into my hand! If I had only known the word “jow,” which means “get out,” how well I could have used it.

In the dining room, a very tall, thin man in snug fitting brown clothes, with a beautiful white turban, was most assiduous in his attentions. He was so

quick and noiseless in his movements, that I called him "the monkey." He followed me to my room and produced the now familiar package, I read them and for two days endured him, then I paid and dismissed him.

Another boy came, with superior recommendations. As these chits are passed from one to the other, I had him identified; he was a Hindu; he could not eat in the hotel; I found his absences rather prolonged, but according to his letters, he was so honest, and he was so clean, and with his white turban looked so well, on the front seat of the carriage, and never ran back for a commission, when I made a purchase, that I engaged him.

Then, oh then the creature changed; he must have warm clothes, for the colder climate we were going to; I found this was the custom. He must have a dozen towels, for your Hindu spends most of his time in the water; I compromised with half a dozen. He would not wear ready made clothes, so the tailor came and I ordered a suit for him.

We were to leave some of our sight-seeing at Calcutta until our return, so our tickets were bought, our car was secured, and we were to leave for Benares at seven-thirty in the evening.

All through India we had a very large car to ourselves; they are long, like our railway carriages with

two beds, a dressing room with water, and a small room for the native servant, opening into the car, which also, had an outside entrance.

There was a folding table to cook upon, cold water was free, but boiling water which was gotten in our tea kettle, cost a penny.

The best trains start at night, we carried our own bedding and a well filled hamper, and always had a good breakfast cooked by my maid, before leaving the car, as a dining car is unheard of in India.

About four o'clock in the afternoon on the day of our departure, my boy appeared with a very soiled turban, an independent air, and his bed, which all servants must take with them.

I said, "You must put on a clean turban before you start with me." (You see the turban was my ideal, I must live up to it.)

He answered, "I haven't any other, you must buy me one."

Of course I refused.

He then said, "I cannot go with you, unless you give me ten rupees for my family, during my absence."

Imagine my feelings with my trunks all packed, and my railway carriage secured.

In my tribulation, I flew down to the manager, who told me it was customary to pay a small sum in advance, but that I must keep his papers as security.

The boy was sent for, and he refused to give me his papers.

The manager with the assurance that he would get me a new boy at once, told him to get out.

Their plan is, to find a new-comer (tenderfoot as it were), get a suit of clothes, which they can pawn, a railway ticket, an advance of ten rupees, put their victim into the railway carriage, and then disappear.

I heard of several who suffered in this way.

My appeal to the manager saved me, for I don't think my saintly Hindu intended to go with me from the first.

Five o'clock came, no new servant and at seven, at the very latest, we must leave the hotel to catch our train.

My heart was a little heavy for I don't like to have my plans disarranged.

Just then, in came two bright-eyed boys; one said, "Here is the boy the manager sent."

I glanced at his chits, put them in my pocket as security for they said everything good, about him.

I engaged him at once, paid him ten rupees for his family, told him the tailor would be ready with his clothes, which luckily had not been delivered, and said, "he must be back in an hour ready to start."

He was off like a shot, I drew a long breath and then came the thought, "Had he a turban on," for

even at that exciting moment, my ideal servant arose before me, and whether I had secured him or not, I was unable to remember.

The tailor came with the clothes. We were in the writing room, from which my room opened, also the dining room and the staircase.

I think every employe of the establishment arrived on the scene; some for their fee, others out of curiosity to see if we should get off. I even suspected there were bets, about the return of my boy in time.

The manager came and said he had sent this same boy, with ladies before, and he could assure me of his fidelity.

Half past six, no boy! quarter of seven, not here!

The monkey man had long been watching and waiting; he wanted to get a Garry and have my luggage put on; the tailor still waiting unpaid, was most excited, when up the stairs with a bound, came my bright-eyed, barefooted boy of about forty, with half a dozen coolies at his heels.

Like magic, the luggage was on the Garry; the clothes were snatched, and tried on; the tailor was paid.

We ran down the stairs with the whole motley crew behind us, the tailor and the monkey man helping us into the Garry. All of Santa's relations had come to see him off. Every minute was precious, but they had brought a bottle of tea, a plate of food, and must

shake hands with him, and say good-bye, and one, more persistent than the rest, put his head in the window, saying, "He is my cousin, take good care of him!" I heard an exasperated exclamation and we were off.

We had just time to get settled before the train started, and when my boy came to get into the servant's part, opening into my carriage, I saw to my dismay that he had on, not a white turban but a small blue cap.

I was too exhausted to think much about my ideal that night, but the next morning I solemnly told him, he must wear a white turban.

Well Santa was a good boy, he at once produced an immaculate turban; he twisted it in the most artistic folds, and he never appeared in my presence without it.

If he wore his cap, which I think was the pride of his heart, he put his turban on, over it. No matter how cold, his feet and his legs were bare to the knee, his turban was always immaculate, and so, my ideal servant was realized. He was a good servant, and took me back to Calcutta, with all my belongings, which is more than many can say, in the troublous year of the Durbar at Delhi, of 1902.

Benares

AN ALL night ride by train from Calcutta brought us to this most interesting city about nine in the morning. We were driven to a pleasant hotel, one story in height, with a broad veranda running the whole front, surrounded by a beautiful rose garden, and I was told I could gather as many roses as I wished.

This veranda was filled with merchants, displaying their wares, embroideries, cashmere shawls, wooden toys, rugs, etc. One merchant, who never told the same price for anything, confessed that he had an asking price, a talking price, and a selling price; so a purchase was a matter of hours.

We soon started to see the sights. We were conducted through narrow, filthy streets on foot, leaving the carriage as we entered the town, to the Golden temple, and to the Monkey temple, both places of Hindu worship and where a daily sacrifice of a goat is made.

We saw the sacred cattle, small grey beasts, slick and clean, in one of the inner courts of the Golden temple and peered at some of their ugly Gods through small apertures, but I found the temples neither inviting nor interesting, so we turned to the bazaars, where the Benares brass is made.

We went up narrow stairs so steep that we were obliged to hold fast to a heavy rope to keep from falling backwards, but were well repaid by the beautiful things to be seen.

In the evening we were invited by a honeymoon couple, to see a Nautch dance.

Again up steep narrow stairs we climbed in the dark, to a small room where four chairs were placed for the distinguished guests, our party, while all around the sides of the room, the natives squatted on their heels waiting for the show to begin; four musicians, with small drum like a child's, cymbals, a queer instrument about five feet long shaped like a banjo, and one other which I cannot now recall; finally two very homely women, except for their bright eyes, appeared.

Their dresses were heavy and voluminous with much cheap gold braid and veils; one was barefooted with beringed toes, the other had brown stockings on.

They slowly walked about, first one then the other, keeping step to the slow music, occasionally coming forward, and shaking each one of us, by the hand.

The music grew a little less solemn, when they held their skirts and whirled a little, their bodies swaying to the music. After this stupendous effort they again shook us by the hand. Then followed a little pantomime which my guide informed us was a flirtation;

again we shook hands and the finale was a song in English:

“When I was single,
My money did jingle,
And I wish I was single
Again, again, again.”

This in voices more discordant than I can find words to express.

These are the famous Nautch girls and the Nautch dance, of which we so often read. I saw them in Jeypore and the slow movement and solemn music were the same.

In the dimly lighted room with the dusky figures lining the wall, with their piercing black eyes shining out, it was not a festive scene.

My boy Santiago by name, though we always spoke of him as Santa, this being Christmas time, it brought pleasant visions of chimneys and babies hanging up their stockings just to mention Santa—well boy, insisted that we get up at six o'clock and go to the Ganges to see the bathers.

He had what he considered an unanswerable argument when I protested. “All the gentlemen are going at six o'clock.”

I compromised with seven-thirty, so in the chill of the morning we drove to the Ganges and regardless

of the chill, the sacred river was well filled with bathers all along the shore; the number was quite sufficient for me, but Santa thought it was no show at all, and assured me that four o'clock was the best time.

We took a queer boat with chairs on top of a cabin, and were rowed for some distance down the river.

On the bank are the palaces of the rich men, who we were told, feed the poor by the hundred daily, temples where the different gods and goddesses are worshipped, and the palaces of the Maharaja.

Between these buildings the river is approached by flights of stone steps, which are called Ghats; these are named as streets are with us.

The most interesting was the burning Ghat; here were the funeral pyres, with the bodies in them, covered with wood, ready to be lighted.

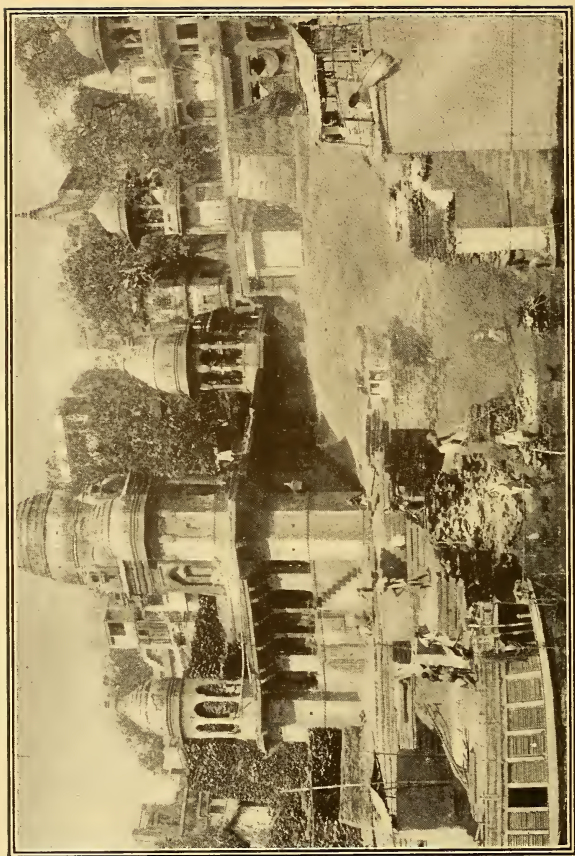
As we stopped opposite this Ghat, the priests, who had just completed a funeral pyre, but without lighting it, ascended a platform at the left, overlooking the pyre, on which a number of men were standing.

Then ensued loud words and many gesticulations.

I enquired from my boy who was intently watching them, what it was all about.

He explained that the body had been brought to the river in a twelve anna robe, about twenty-four cents, but when the relatives came to see the burning,

The Burning Ghat



they were recognized as rich men, who should have sent the body in a rich robe, which would have belonged to the priests, so they refused to light the fire, until the proper amount was paid them.

At last, the matter was settled and we saw the torch applied.

During this controversy, a body was brought by four men on a light stretcher and placed with the feet in the muddy water.

One man, the nearest relative, dipped handfuls of water and poured down the throat of the prostrate form; this he did three times, and then left the place.

I was told, but do not vouch for the truth of the story, that if a person took a longer time to die, than was considered necessary or reasonable, they were brought to the bank of the sacred river and instead of water being poured into the mouth, a little mud thrown in assisted them in their exit, but should they recover and wander back to their home, as sometimes happens, no one would receive them; they were outcasts and dead to their families.

“According to the native faith of the Hindu, the sacred city of Benares is sixty thousand miles nearer heaven than any other spot on our sinful little sphere, and in affectionate solicitude for the soul about to depart on its journey for the spirit world the believer tenderly brings his dying relative to this auspicious

starting point, but should signs of physical weakness and disease fail and the sick recover he can never leave the bank of the sacred river, but must abide there in a little house of waiting built for him until the final summons comes, even if years intervene."

Bodies are also thrown into the Ganges and the captain of our ship at Calcutta said when this was permitted, he would find a number of bodies washed against the ship which must be pushed away before starting on a voyage.

This was all gruesome and ghastly, and I gladly told the rowers to move on to see the bathers.

The better class had platforms built in the water with awnings, but open on all sides, for while the women of the higher class are rarely seen, there were many bathing with great indifference to the lookers on.

They walk into the water with their clothes on, which consists of a jacket and skirt, after a thorough scrubbing of their person, the jacket is removed and washed, so I saw many men and women naked to the waist.

As they walked to the shore, where the water was shallow, a dry skirt was put on, and then the clean jacket; the wet skirt was slipped off, and wrung out and here was the bath taken, and the family washing done while you wait; I saw this same thing many times, not only in India, but in Burma and, while it



THE BATHERS

sounds a difficult thing to do, constant practice has made them very deft, for a good Hindu must take a daily bath.

After the bath, three stripes are drawn on the forehead, a red stripe in the center nearly half an inch broad, and two stripes of gray from ashes. They may

be across or up and down, sometimes merely a red dot, the size of an old fashioned wafer, is put between the eyebrows, or a spot of ashes.

This marking of the forehead has a special religious significance, denoting their sect, and must never be indulged in until after the bath; neither can the temple be visited until after the bath; so from the river to the temple in all cities in India the path is sloppy, wet and disagreeable.

On a beautiful Sunday afternoon I started to visit the palace of the Maharaja of Benares; we drove to the Ganges where a boat was in waiting, brought from the lower part of the river by the turbaned footman, who ornamented the rear of the big, unclean rattle trap of a Landau.

Our hotel boasted of two such vehicles and as this was the best one, at least the horses were a little less bony than the other pair, I thought we were quite fortunate.

The distances are tremendous, the dust intolerable, walking impossible, so I must pay the exorbitant price for the day, and then pass most of the day on a boat, or in shops, or walking through the filthy streets, where carriages cannot go.

The river was lovely, the air was soft and mild, and the sun not hot, but beamed gently upon us through a hazy mist, as we rowed up the river, with

the palace of the Maharaja visible in the distance.

As we crossed the river, two, the strongest of our boatmen, took long coils of stout rope on their arms, stepped over the side of the boat into the shallow water, and then pulled the boat upstream against a heavy current. A sail was also raised, so the rowers, who sat quite below us, had little to do.

As we neared the palace, a man came running at full speed down the sandy shore, plunged into the stream and seemed making for the boat.

I was very lazy, and very sleepy, but I roused myself sufficiently to wonder what could be his errand, and why such haste! Why, indeed! He was a messenger sent for my visiting card, so I could be received in state!

He ran back as fast as he had come, bearing the pasteboard aloft like a very small banner.

The palace was not much to see; I have a remembrance of wading ankle deep through dust to get there, and of rooms glittering with chandeliers with innumerable glass pendants, just what you see in every palace in the East.

I wrote my name where many celebrities had written theirs, in a big book.

I then begged that I might be taken by a shorter way to the boat, as we were on the very edge of the river.

We were taken down the private and royal stone steps, and came upon a fine stone balcony, with the royal barges floating below us, and above, a beautiful white marble Buddha in a niche, with two attendant priests in yellow robes.

I gave them a rupee, they threw garlands of yellow marigolds about my neck and of my companion, and said, as my boy translated, that "we should both have handsome husbands before the year was over."

Why such a terrible fate was in store for me, just for a rupee, I was unable to imagine.

We got into our boat, up a ladder to the top of the little cabin, and in the beautiful afterglow on the rainbow hued water, we floated back to our landing place.

The beggars and the back-sheesh were a little incongruous, but the afterglow lingered and the drive home was a pleasant finale to a dreamy, delightful day.

I left Benares with regret, which would have been all the keener had I realized that I was going forth into a wilderness of crowded hotels and high prices, and turning my back upon the most comfortable hotel in India, except in Calcutta, that it was my good fortune to find.



THE RESIDENCY

Lucknow

THE terrible Indian mutiny of 1857, in which so many noble British fell under the fire of the mutineers, or by the ravages of cholera, is the chief interest of Lucknow.

The Residency, a name applied to the ruined buildings and to the extensive grounds as well, show little signs of the terrible struggle and suffering of those gloomy times.

One sees the roofless walls, broken and battered, some graves simply marked, and an artificial mound,

thirty feet high, on which is a handsome white marble cross, twenty feet in height; on this is inscribed:

In Memory of
Major-Gen., Sir Henry Lawrence
K. C. B.

And the brave men who fell
In defense of the Residency
1857.

The vines clambered freely over the ruins, flowers bloomed gaily in the garden, and the scene of the siege, and the battles, is now a beautiful park.

We drove to all the places of interest in and around Lucknow, and to the bazaars, where I found the prices high, and the articles offered commonplace, and, much to Santa's, my servant's, disappointment, I could only be induced to buy a pair of gold embroidered shoes, with toes very much turned up; his profits would not be large at this rate, he thought.

The next place that was on the program to stop over was Cawnpore, but our landlord assured us that the plague was very bad at Cawnpore, cholera also, and beside there was nothing to see but the well into which were thrown two hundred persons, chiefly women and children, some alive, some dying and others dead.

I had seen and heard quite enough of the mutiny and its horrors, for Santa was particularly fond of

cemeteries, as he called every monument or grave; so I decided not to stop at Cawnpore.

The landlord and the time table were consulted, that no mistake should be made.

We usually took a train, and just got off when we reached our stopping place, for the tickets particularly stated "that changes might be made without notification," which was more true than agreeable.

I found that we were to change cars at Cawnpore, and wait an hour for the train to Agra.

Upon arrival we were ushered with much ceremony into the waiting room, and Santa disappeared. When he returned it was to say that the train had gone, and the next one would be here at two o'clock in the morning, giving me to understand that the train had left before we arrived.

Before deciding what to do, to go to a hotel as many did, or take the train when it came, I thought best to consult the station master. Santa was rather reluctant about finding him, but when I persisted and did succeed, and was told that although our train was late, there had been plenty of time to have gotten the one for Agra, well, Santa had a bad quarter of an hour.

There was a dining room in the station of most uninviting appearance, but fortunately I had my hamper filled with all the necessaries for a good supper.

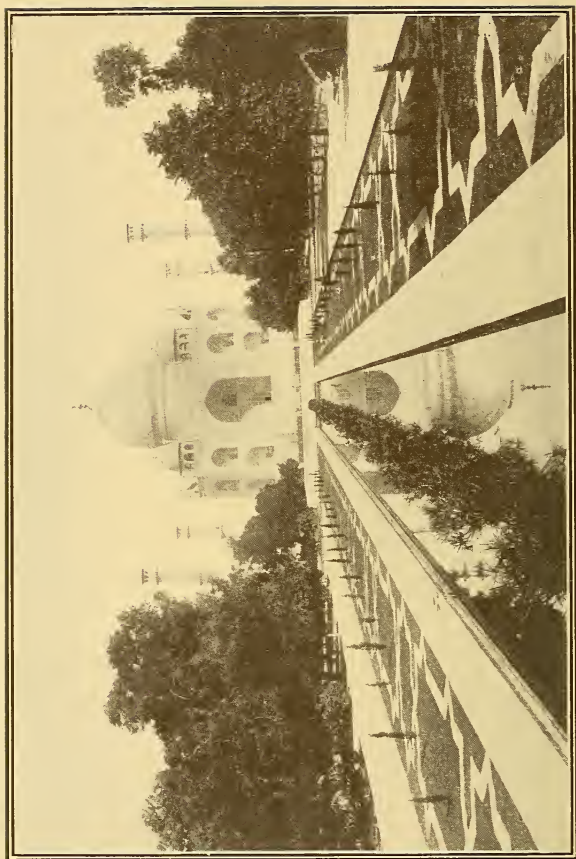
We then had the big waiting room to ourselves, and very soon with our neat little outfit, had a hot supper fit for a king or any other hungry mortal.

There was a fine bath tub where we might have had a hot bath as well, but we were content with the beds that were arranged for us. No bedding—that is unheard of in India—but, having plenty of our own, I was in a dreamless sleep at once, waking suddenly in time for the train.

At this time the room was well filled with beds, all occupied, showing that to sleep in a public waiting room is not unusual in India.

And thus, despite all my plans, I did stop over at Cawnpore.

The Taj Mahal



Agra

"A city of about 175,000 population; 850 miles from Calcutta, is famous for its art, curiosities, temples, shrines and picturesque ruins. The walls of the old city are seven by three miles, inclosing the ruins of many ancient mosques, baths, Hindu temples, tombs, etc. Taj Mahal, a tomb built by the great Shah Jehan for his beautiful Queen Mu Jehan (the light of the world), is a superbly constructed edifice of polished white marble, as fresh and pure as when first built, surmounted by a graceful dome decorated with rich mosaics on a white ground, inlaid with jasper, agate, carnelian and other precious stones. Two thousand men were employed 22 years in the construction of this mausoleum, and it cost \$15,000,000."

THE night had been very cold, but, as the train neared Agra, the sun was shining warm and brilliantly, lighting the dome and minarets of the Taj Mahal with a glory which was their due. The pure white marble shone and glistened in the morning sun, and I felt that, for the long journey and the discomforts of travel in India, I was well repaid by this fairylike vision, for it seemed too ethereal to be real.

The hotel was quite large and gave promise of some comfort, and a carriage was secured for the time of our stay. I was soon on the way to a nearer view of the Taj Mahal, or The Crown Lady's Tomb.

This mausoleum was commenced in 1630 A. D., by the Emperor Shah Jehan, as a tomb for his favorite

queen, Arjmand Banu, entitled Mumtaz Mahal, the Chosen of the Palace or the Pride of the Palace.

Mumtaz-i-Mahal was married to Shah Jehan in 1615, had by him seven children and died at the birth of the eighth child in 1629.



Her body was laid in the garden where the Taj now stands until the mausoleum was built.

Mere words fail to convey the faintest idea of this magnificent mausoleum, but more wonderful than the tomb itself, is the fact that it was erected to the memory of a woman, in a country where women are held so lightly.

Outside of the
Gateway to the
Taj Mahal



Shah Jehan rests by the side of his queen, the two monuments most exquisite in carving, and jewels inlaid in the marble, but this is the queen's tomb, and Shah Jehan is known as the builder.

The gate by which one enters the grounds is a magnificent building of red sandstone, making a fine contrast to the white marble of the tomb.

So many writers have described the Taj Mahal in glowing language, that it is useless for me to say aught, for it must be seen, not once, but many times, to half appreciate its beauty.

The days were beautiful and sunny, but every night the moon was obscured by clouds.

The last night of my stay in Agra, I made a farewell visit to the Taj.

The moon was kind enough to emerge from the clouds and shed a soft radiance over the beautiful scene.

The lovely garden is divided by shallow marble courses filled with water, crossing at right angles in the center, from which center rose an immense basin with a fountain. Here were seats to rest, for the walk was long from the gateway.

The dome and minarets of the Taj were reflected in the water.

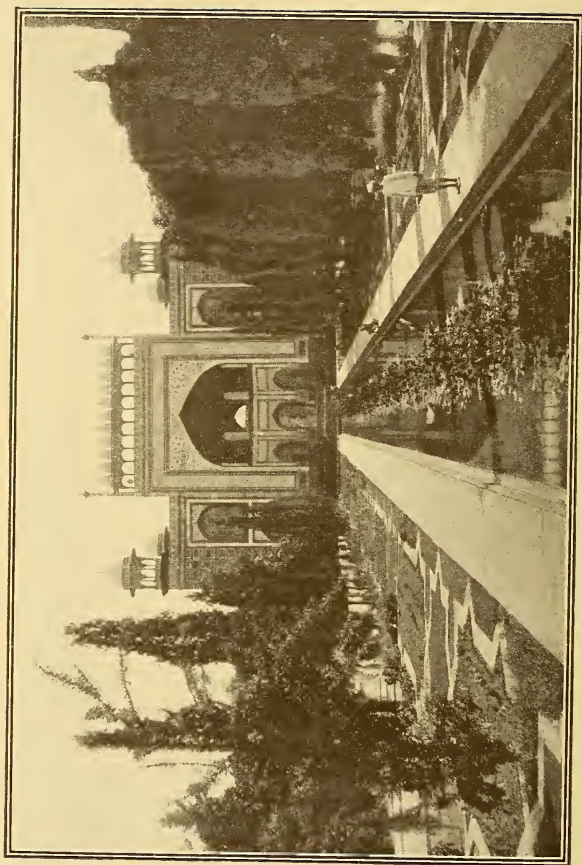
There were many people walking quietly through

the grounds, but the stillness was so profound, one felt as if alone in a solemn place.

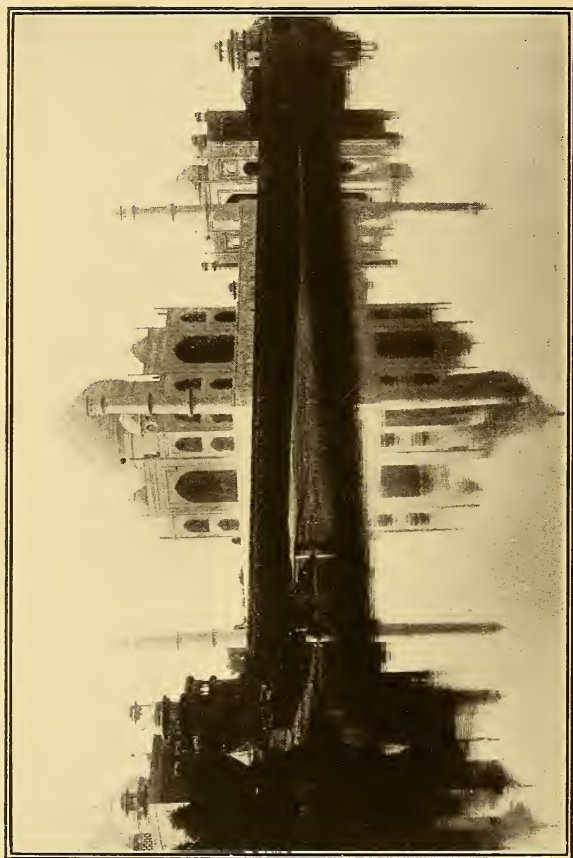
We walked upon the marble terrace surrounding the central building, from which the four minarets rise. We leaned upon the parapet and gazed down upon the sacred waters of the river Jumna, upon whose brink the mausoleum stands.

We were loath to leave the place, but finally, with determined step, started for the gateway, often turning and looking back in the pale moonlight to this beautiful "poem in marble."

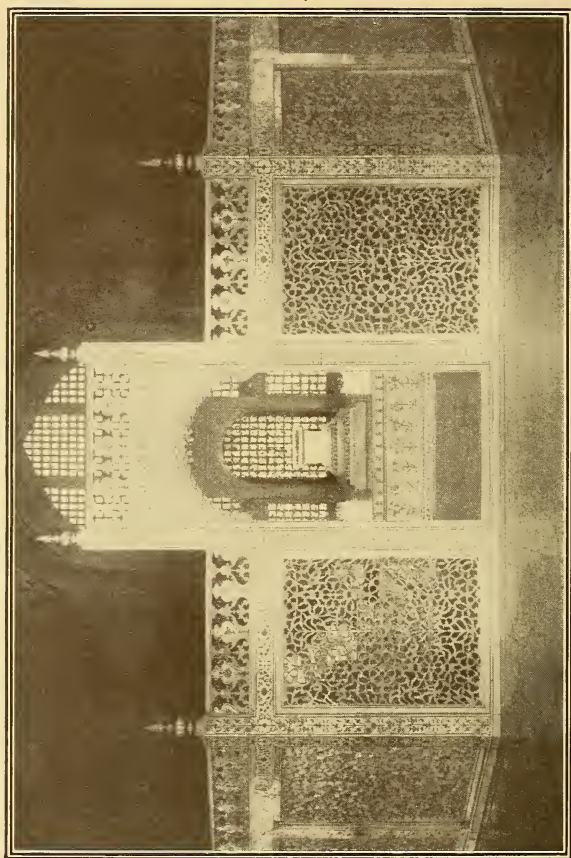
Gateway
From the Garden



The Taj Mahal
From the
River Side



**The Crown
Lady's Tomb**



The Crown Lady's Tomb

Oh, lady fair, with thy queenly air;
Thy king besought thee his throne to share.
He was master, and ruler, o'er all the land,
And he ruled his people with iron hand.

Fair queen, for thy tomb
Men labored and died,
Gold poured forth as water,
And no one beside
Can claim to their memory,
Can claim to their pride,
Such beauty, such grandeur,
Such splendor, I ween,
As gleams, for the world,
To thy glory, oh! Queen.

Oh, lady fair, thou art sleeping there,
Neath the lace-like marble with jewels rare.
Oh pride of the palace, Mumtaz-i-Mahal.
Dost thy spirit still linger
 'Neath the beautiful dome
That thy fond lover builded,
For thy last earthly home.

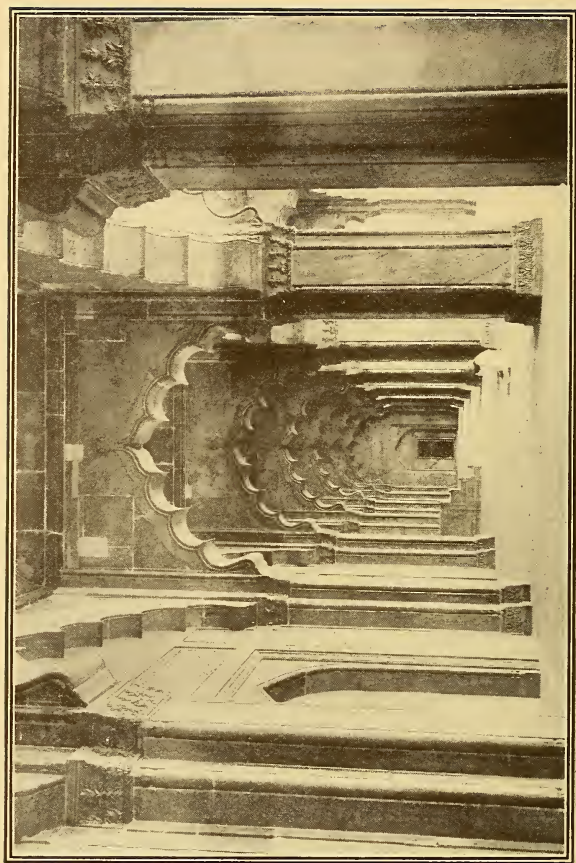
Thy lover is resting in peace at thy side;
The storm and the battle for him are no more.
The light of the world,
His queen and his bride,
Was his last thought on earth
When his sorrows were o'er.

M. E. F.



ON THE TERRACE

The Pearl Mosque





THE FORT AT AGRA

The Fort at Agra

FOR the beautiful palace and the Pearl Mosque within the heavy and forbidding walls of the Fort, I was wholly unprepared.

We arrived at the Fort and drove through the gateway, on and on, gradually ascending, then over a drawbridge, then between high walls, the roadway so narrow that two carriages could barely pass, twisting and turning until we came upon a high plateau, and stopped at the "Moti Musjid," the Pearl Mosque, which Fergusson describes as "one of the purest and most elegant buildings to be found anywhere."

It was built by Shah Jehan in A. D. 1655. All the beauties of the mosque were fully shown and explained by the custodian and Santa.

We then descended the long flight of steps and were soon in front of the palace. In the center, commanding a view of the whole court, was a small gallery with a marble seat.

This was the Diwan-i-Am, or hall of public audience, where the reigning emperor heard the complaints of the people.

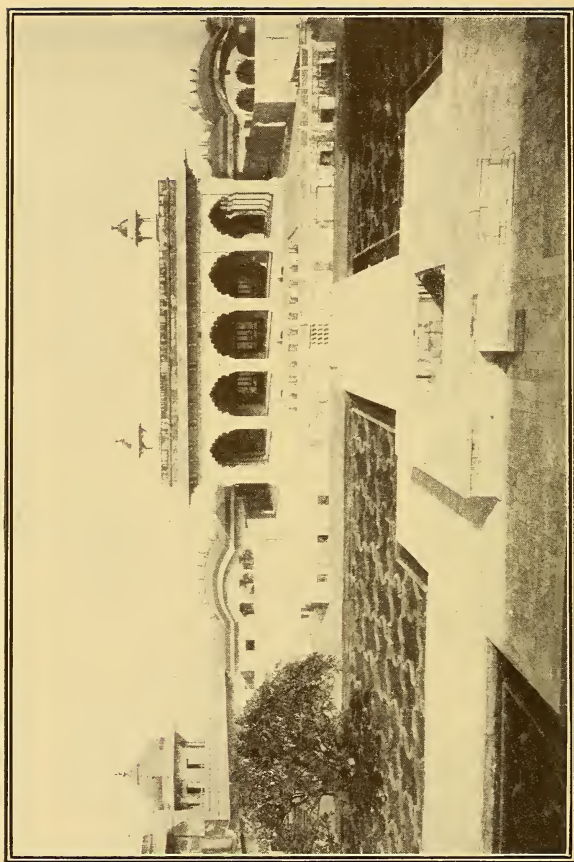
Back of this and opening on a terrace was the Diwan-i-Khas, or hall of private audience. This is a miracle of beauty. The carving is exquisite and flowers are inlaid in the white marble with cornelian and other colored stones.

From this throne on the terrace, the Emperor looked over the broad river to the beautiful gardens and buildings on the opposite shore.

A staircase leads to the "Saman Burj" or Jasmin Tower where the chief Sultana lived and to a beautiful pavilion with a fountain and a retiring room, which were the Emperor's private apartments.

Adjoining was the golden pavilion with tiny bedrooms for the ladies, with pockets in the wall, fourteen inches deep, into which they put their jewels. The openings at the top are so small that only a woman's arm could draw the jewels out.

**The Grape Garden
and the Baths**



There was a beautiful grape garden where a waterfall was arranged over lighted lamps of different colors. From this was filled a large tank where the ladies could bathe, with little seats like perches for them to rest upon.

A short distance, opening on this garden were the mirror rooms, two dark rooms lined with small mirrors, here were tanks for bathing, the water flowing over an artificial cascade with lighted lamps behind it. I have since read that these baths were for the princesses.

In Shah Jehan's time these were fountains of perfumed water.

All this was shown and explained by a most polite and elegant young Englishman, who belonged to the Fort, which is now under British rule. He now ordered torches, and we were conducted into the lower regions, explaining as we went, that here was where the doomed wives were conducted, before making their final exit.

A small room with high grated apertures was where these poor creatures were placed, who had in some way displeased their lord and master. Only a short distance was another room with a strong beam, and a heavy rope. Here they were hung, and when cut down, dropped into a secret passage three hundred feet deep, which connected with the river.

I was glad to return to the light of day, thinking as I went, of the inconsistencies of the poor, benighted Hindu.

The small grey cattle are sacred.

A person would be killed who hurt a monkey; a serpent is even more sacred than a monkey; there is hardly a bird or a beast that is not sacred, and must not be injured, but over a woman her husband had the power to torture and to kill, with none to help her in her need!

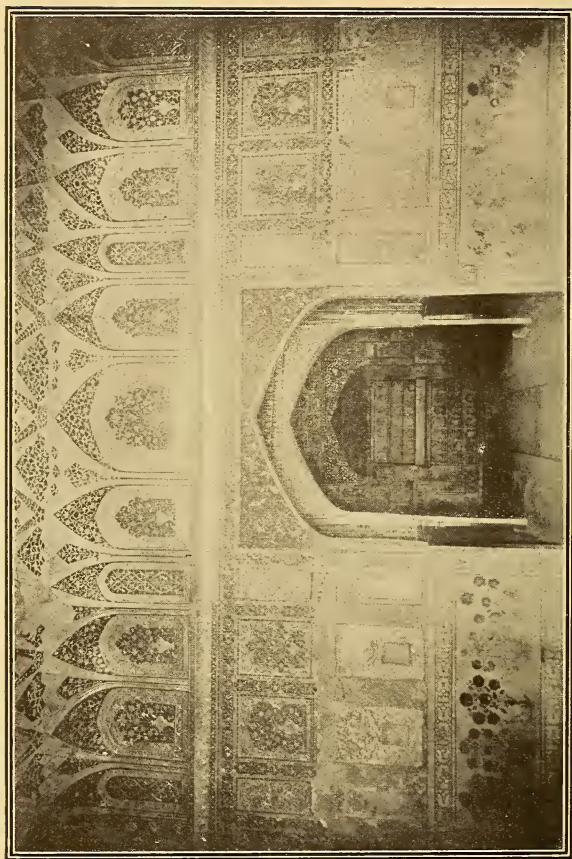
Adjoining this palace we were shown the old palace, built by Akbar, grandfather of Shah Jehan, which is now being restored.

At the opposite side of the palace and adjoining the Diwan-i-Am, is a beautiful mosque, called the Gem Mosque, built by Shah Jehan for the ladies of the court; at the side is a gallery where the ladies sat to examine the goods which were brought by merchants, and displayed in the courts below.

There are small rooms here, where Shah Jehan was imprisoned for seven years by his son and successor, Aurangzib.

His captivity was shared by his daughter, Jehanara, who was tenderly devoted to her father; from here he was carried, when he was dying, to the room nearest the river—an octagonal pavilion and very beautiful. Here he died gazing upon the Taj, the tomb of his favorite wife.

The Mirror Rooms





AKBAR'S TOMB, M. E. F. AND SANTA

Akhar's Tomb

WE STARTED for Sikandarah quite early in the morning, for the distance was five miles from Agra, and the sun grew very hot at mid-day. The gateway to the garden surrounding Akbar's tomb is truly magnificent. It is of red sandstone, very massive and inlaid with white marble.

A broad paved walk leads to the mausoleum. It is a pyramidal building of four stories, three of which are of red sandstone, the fourth being of white marble.

A gentle incline leads down to the vaulted chamber in which the great Akbar rests. It is quite dark and the once illumined walls are now soiled and discolored.

Narrow staircases lead above. The highest platform open to the sky is surrounded by a cloister of white marble beautifully carved. In the center is the splendid white marble cenotaph, just over the place where his dust rests in the gloomy chamber below. On one side of this cenotaph is inscribed, "God is greatest," on the other, "May His glory shine."

A few feet distant is a white marble pillar, which was once covered with gold and contained the great diamond Koh-i-Nur. It is supposed to have been taken from here by Nadir Shah.

On the way home we stopped at the rug manufactory. At the big squares of warp sat rows of small boys from six to ten years of age.

These very deftly put in the colors with the simplest of instruments as they were called out by a larger boy, who stood at the end of the bench, and managed for two rugs.

It takes six months to learn, and the pay is very small, but the boys looked happy and contented, and

we were told the work was eagerly sought for. A good sized rug can be made in three months.

They are beautiful, and not very expensive, and are shipped to all the large cities. I saw many cases marked for New York.

I think at least ten boys were at work on one rug at the same time. They are paid by the inch. Their little hands and fingers just flew over the colored yarns as they put them in, and fastened them.

We visited many shops, but the small models of the Taj and the marble inlaid with colored stones had no attraction for me. It was beautiful in the Taj, but in small boxes and other pieces, I would have none of it.

Jeypore

WE REACHED Jeypore in the evening, but I felt no anxiety, as I had wired for rooms and all the world was supposed to be at Delhi, two mistakes, for my wire had not been received, and there was not a vacant room in the hotel.

After much deliberation, the manager said there was one room, which was reserved for a young man; he would give me this room, and put the young man in a tent. It was not a good room, he said (he was right there), but it was the only one he had.

Not that I saw the manager, but this was the word that Santa brought.

Arriving at a hotel in India is unique.

You drive up; if with two horses there is always a footman.

Your own servant and this footman assist you out, and place your small luggage beside you.

All you can do is to sit still, wait, and be stared at by the occupants of the veranda.

This is what happened here.

Finally we were ushered by Santa into as poor a place for our room as I have ever seen.

It was on the ground floor, in fact all the rooms I occupied in India, except in Calcutta, were on the ground floor. This had one small window without

glass; when we closed the wooden shutters we were in darkness; there were two beds without bedding, and a dressing room, which happily one always finds.

There is no trouble about plumbing in these countries; one corner of this dressing room had a cement partition about a foot high, and here you throw the water, regardless of consequences, even in the second story, as we were in Calcutta, and in Burma; nothing seems to happen.

We dressed by a small lamp, and a candle in a tumbler, and Santa came and escorted us to dinner.

Here we found a brilliant company.

Lady Mary and Lady Jane were here, with servants galore, both white and black.

Santa had secured very good seats at table d'hôte and waited upon us, to the best there was, which was nothing to boast of.

As yet I had not seen a person who seemed to belong to the hotel.

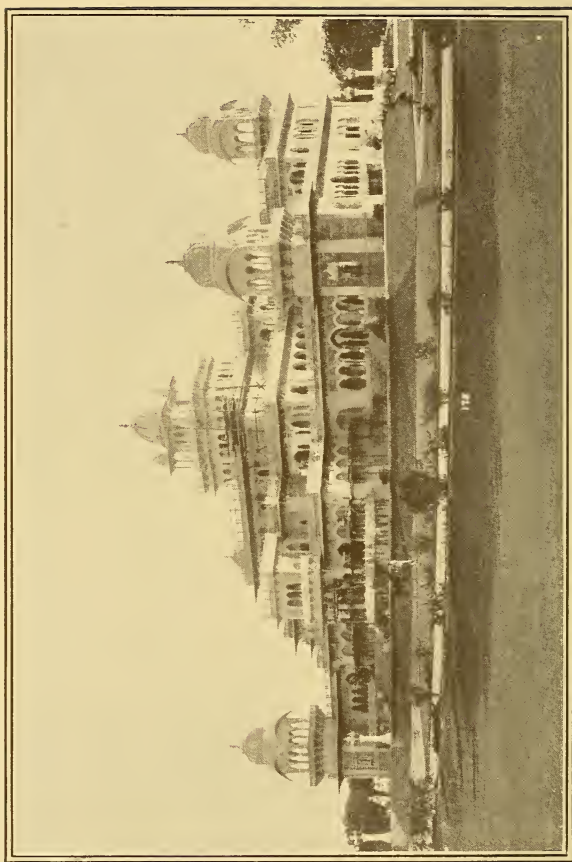
When we went to our room, Santa made our beds, and then his bed, outside the door, and was our guardian for the night.

The morning was beautiful.

Santa brought our "chota-hazri," or early tea and toast, in good season.

We were soon on our way to see the sights in the highest and biggest landau it has ever been my

The Albert Hall



fate to see; Santa, who made the arrangement for the carriages, seemed to think the bigger the better.

I remember I had something under my feet, and a pillow at my back to prop me in.

We first went to the public garden outside the city wall, one of the finest gardens in India.

These gardens cost the Maharaja thirty thousand rupees a year to keep up.

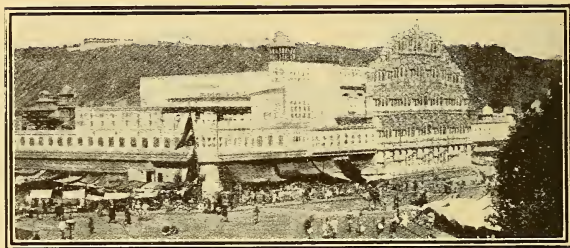
In the center of the garden is the Albert Hall, a sumptuous modern building for which the Prince of Wales laid the cornerstone in 1876. It contains a large Durbar Hall and a beautiful museum.

The collections of modern works of art, and of industry, also of antiques from every part of India, are very complete, and most interesting, while the examples of pottery, and enameling made in Jeypore, were most surprising and beautiful.

We then drove into the town, which is remarkable for the width and regularity of its streets. The main streets are over one hundred feet wide, and are lined with fine buildings three to four stories in height, quite uniform in their style; they seemed to be covered with plaster and were colored a bright "crushed strawberry," as nearly as I can describe it.

In the bright sunlight, the uniform color of street after street was charming. These streets were crowded and the bazaars most picturesque.

The printed cottons, with the Maharaja's stamp, were beautiful. Many stones are found in the state, the cutting of which is a large branch of industry, while the beautiful shapes, and color of the pottery, made one want all they saw.



THE MAHARAJA'S PALACE

We went to the Maharaja's palace and through the grounds. We viewed the stables in which I think there were five hundred beautiful horses.

We walked and walked, through dust ankle deep, to see the fighting elephants, which were not much of a sight, but we could, on our way, look up to the small barred apertures, and see the Zenana, or women's apartments, and were told that the Maharaja had 556 wives.

Jeypore is the pleasant, healthy capital of one of the most prosperous independent states of Rajputana.

It is the residence of the Maharaja, whose estate covers nearly 15,000 square miles, with a population of 2,500,000 souls.

On Sunday afternoon we drove to the city, through the huge gateway, where it seemed as if the whole population was in the streets.

All the shops were open and seemed a little gayer than on other days.

The crowd was so great, we must drive slowly, which gave the merchants time to rush upon us with their wares; at one time the carriage would be filled with embroidered shoes of all sizes and descriptions, this because I had stopped at a booth and looked at shoes several days before. I could not drive in that street without every man or boy on the street actually stopping the carriage to make a sale.

Then the printed cotton street; they flew at us waving long streamers of cotton in lovely colorings, some still damp from the dye.

We stopped to see some Nautch girls dance, and such a crowd collected, that the police dispersed them.

Santa for a pice, like our pennies, bought a big paper of their lowest coin, which is small shells; ten of them is a handsome gift to a beggar, and beggars there were in plenty.

About five o'clock the crowd was almost impassible, and we began to meet the wedding processions.

The first was the son of an official, he looked a boy of fourteen, and was reclining, with a very bored look, in a palanquin. Before him walked dancing girls, playing on cymbals, with little bells on their fingers.

The whole procession would stop, and these girls would sing, and dance a little, and then all would move on. We kept even with them, as long as we could, until they turned into another street.

One wedding was most pathetic, the women who walked were richly dressed, music headed the procession, and everything gave evidence of wealth.

I stopped the carriage, to allow them to pass, when a beautiful palanquin with purple hangings came quite near me.

In it was a little girl, not more than six years of age, with the silver bridal veil on her head. There was a pause in the procession, when she lifted the corner of her veil, and peeped out at a stranger with a sweet baby smile.

I counted thirteen wedding processions that afternoon, of all classes, and conditions. Sometimes the bride walked, but always with the silver veil over her head.

The day was warm and lovely, and the people seemed almost gay—the only time and place, in India, where I saw a smile, with few exceptions.

As a rule, the people have an angry, sullen, blood-thirsty look, a look of hate that is not pleasant to see.

I asked an Englishman if he was not afraid of another mutiny, and he said their safety lay in the fact that while the people of India hated the British, they hated each other more.

The Hindu and the Mohammedan religion, and the strict class distinctions may account for the evil look upon their black faces, and the dagger-like glitter in their shining black eyes.

Now Santa was a Christian, and the ugly gleam had departed from his eyes, but was not replaced by a smile.

He was probably a deacon, from his happy way of taking up a collection, for when we started from Calcutta, he had not money enough to fee a cooley; our journey was not half completed, when he could change a bill for me of any amount, and fee coolies to a lordly extent.

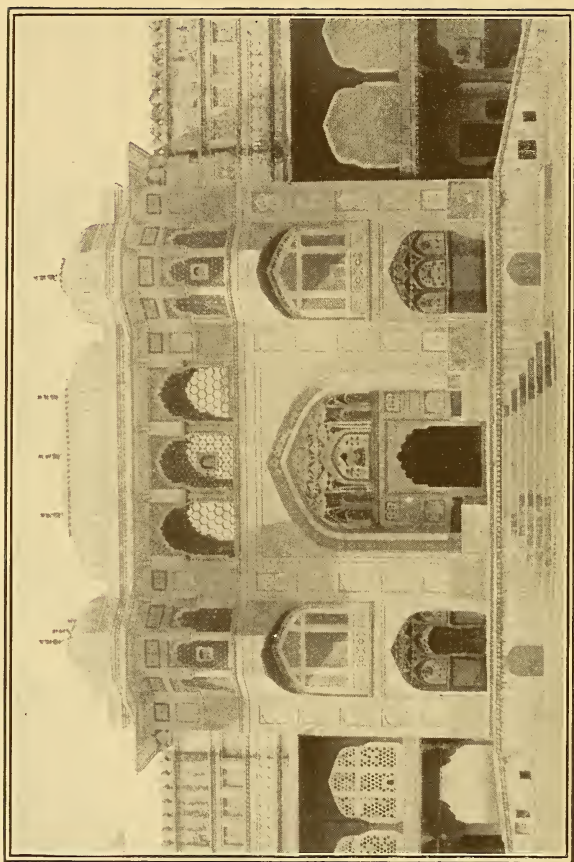
I rubbed out his slate every night, and began again in the morning, and I noticed that fees grew larger, and coolies more expensive, as we neared our journey's end.

Poor Santa! I would not buy, no matter how many or how fascinating the shops to which he took me.

There was always such a long consultation with

him before the price was named, that I had plenty of time to make up my mind how much an article was worth, and if I really wanted it, before Santa was satisfied (of course this parley went on in Hindustani), and when I made my offer, it was rarely enough to cover Santa's commission with profit.

Gate of
Glass Palace at
Amber





ARRIVAL AT AMBER

Amber

ARE you going to Amber? Have you a permit?
Have you an elephant?

Everybody was asking everybody else that sunny morning on the veranda of the hotel at Jeypore.

Yes, I had all these, and we soon started with quite a calvacade for the old capital, now the ruined city of Amber.

We drove to the foot of the mountain side, where the elephants were waiting.

A huge fellow with housings, which might once have been handsome, but were now rather shabby, knelt down in true circus style, and we climbed by aid of a ladder to his back, but the howdah was not so comfortable as one I rode in when a child, or so handsome.

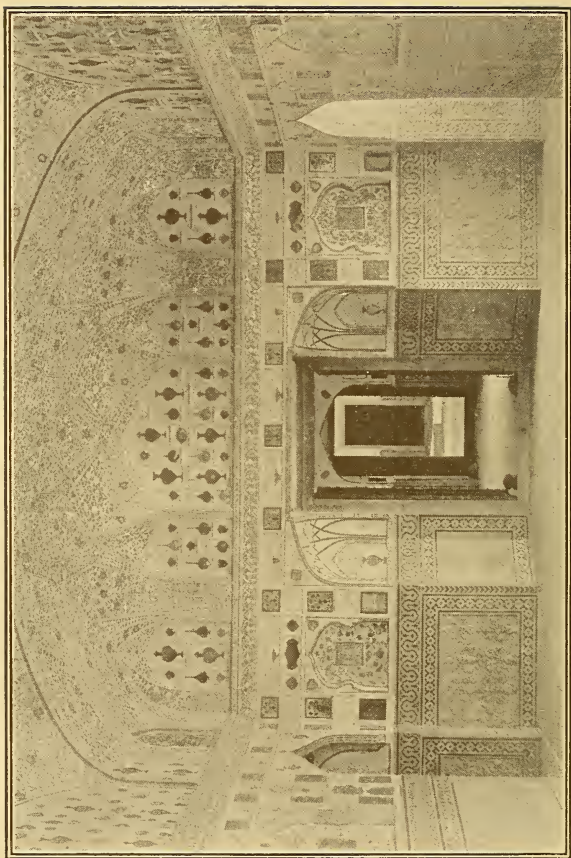
The elephant rocked and rolled up the steep path, made more picturesque by the procession of elephants slowly winding up. We dismounted in the court yard, and were shown through the palace.

To the right of the Diwan-i-Am is a small temple, where a goat offered each morning to Kali preserves the tradition of a daily human sacrifice on the same spot, in prehistoric times.

On a higher terrace are the Maharaja's own apartments, entered by a splendid gateway covered with mosaics and sculpture.

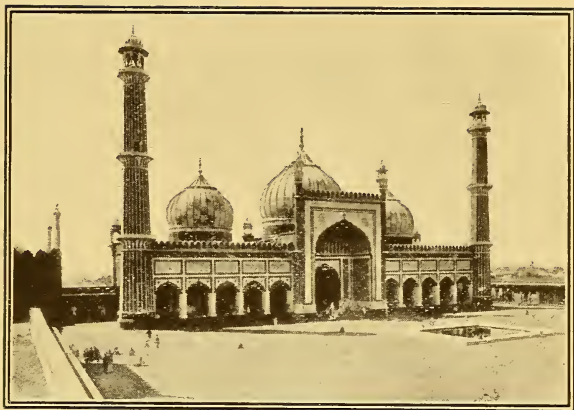
The Hall of Victory is adorned with panels of alabaster, "the roof glittering with the mirrored and spangled work for which Jeypore is renowned." Above is the Jas Mandis "which literally glows with bright and tender colors and exquisite inlaid work, and looks

**The Glass Palace at
Amber**



through arches of carved alabaster and clusters of slender columns upon the sleeping lake and the silent mountains."

It was all very beautiful.



THE JUMMA MUSJID

Delhi

WHAT can I say of Delhi, that has not been better said, and printed in every newspaper in the land in this year of 1903?

The Durbar was over two days before I arrived, the Viceroy and Vice reine and many of the guests had departed.

Accounts of the enormous crowds and the impossibility of securing any accommodations, prevented me from going to Delhi during the Durbar, and now Delhi was dishevelled; deep dust covered the road-

ways, and many deep d-d's descended on the Delhi Durbar, which was deemed responsible for all the ills that had befallen the visitors, that had gathered from all parts of the world.

The nights were frightfully cold, and the dainty dames, from Duchess to ladies in waiting, shivered in the icy atmosphere of an unwarmed tent.

There was no difficulty in securing accommodations to go to Delhi, but to get away was quite another matter!

The city was still crowded, and I was told to secure a return train, as soon as I reached Delhi, which I tried to do. The trains—well, they were all wild trains, and all seemed to have lost their right of way.

If I asked about trains, I was referred to the station master, and what he said at one time, he contradicted the next time I saw him. I fairly haunted the station, fearing I might never be able to leave Delhi, until the station master lost himself, and left word that he had gone out of town; but I knew my man, and caught him, and pinned him down to a special carriage, and a special train, which having a written order for, I felt somewhat relieved as to the length of my enforced stay.

The castle and the fort was a poor affair after Agra, though the remains of the decorations for the grand ball of the Durbar were still “en evidence.”

The Jumma Musjid, or mosque, is said to be unrivalled for size.

I was told an interesting story in connection with this mosque.

The day of the procession, during the Durbar, every part of the mosque was filled with visitors to view the gorgeous spectacle, and as the ceremonies would be long, brought tiffin and especially ham sandwiches with them, some of which was scattered about the floor of the mosque.

Now pork to a Mohammedan being most unclean, is like a red rag to a bull; their beautiful mosque had been defiled; the outrage and the insult must be avenged.

The next evening was arranged for the grand display of fireworks; this was the opportunity.

About six hundred men armed themselves with clubs and sticks; they were to mingle in the crowd, at night, and beat these "dogs of christians."

Most fortunately, the plot was discovered, the men were disarmed, and a regiment of cavalry was ordered on the scene to prevent any outbreak, and awe the angry mob.

Rumors of an impending uprising, at the time of the Durbar, had reached me at Calcutta, which made Delhi seem less desirable, than even want of accommodation.

But the iron hand of the Viceroy was everywhere felt; the minutest detail was brought to him; so not a blemish marred the success of this splendid Durbar.

India has good cause to honor Lord Curzon.

He spent enormous sums of money to restore the beautiful architectural gems, which she possesses, and to insure them from further decay and destruction, and where restoration was being done, I was always told, "Lord Curzon is having this done."

I often heard it said, "he is a born ruler," "he is the best Viceroy India has ever had."

From every one, whom I met, words failed them, to express their pride in, and their admiration for Lady Curzon. "Our American Queen," as they called her.

In speaking of the jewels worn at the Durbar ball, of the Duchess of Marlborough's, and of others, they always ended, "but Lady Curzon's were as handsome as any one's."

Then her smile, how often it was spoken of; in the procession some one said it reached every one, and made them glad and happy all day. Her charming manner, her beautiful head and shoulders, all were commented upon with loving praise.

I hope she knows how much she is beloved, how her gentle and gracious manner has won all hearts!

The tents still covered the plains; the little railway, that connected the different camps, still slowly puffed

around the narrow gauge track; the enormous elephants with their stately tread and beautiful housings were constantly seen, for many of the Indian princes were still in Delhi, but the gay crowd had departed and Delhi seemed deserted.

Prices at the hotels and for carriages were still high, for the hotels had named such fabulous prices, to their would-be patrons, that the great crowd that was expected stayed away, or brought tents and food with them. So both provision sellers, and hotel keepers lost heavily, and tried to even the loss, with the later comers, but the attraction was so small, and the discomfort so great, that the all-absorbing thought was, how to get away.

Five hours waiting in the station and at last, after the Maharaja, and the elephants, had departed in their special train, and several other trains had pulled out, the special train for which I had an order, was made up, and four hours after the time named, we were en route to Calcutta.

Santa urged that I should stop over at Allahabad, there were so many interesting things to see, and to buy. Not I.

With every train crowded I might not again be able to secure such a comfortable railway carriage; so we slowly rolled and rolled for two nights, and nearly two days, on, on to Calcutta.



GOVERNMENT HOUSE

Calcutta

IT WAS good to be back in Calcutta to a large fine room at the comfortable Grand hotel; to find a housekeeper sitting up for us, even though we arrived at the unearthly hour of three in the morning; to have the nice cup of hot tea and an egg, with delicious toast, served even at that hour, for the drive was long from the station and the air chilly, and then to go to bed with the happy feeling that some of the sights of Calcutta had been done, and that one had a little time to enjoy one's self.

Everything seemed so fine in the morning!

Calcutta is a city of magnificent buildings, and they seemed to have grown during my absence; the streets were clean and free from dust.

The horses looked like Arabian coursers, after the sorry jaded beasts I had grown accustomed to, and the coachmen and footmen, with their grand turbans of every conceivable color, that had seemed rather shabby before, why, they looked fairly regal, as they passed up and down in front of the hotel.

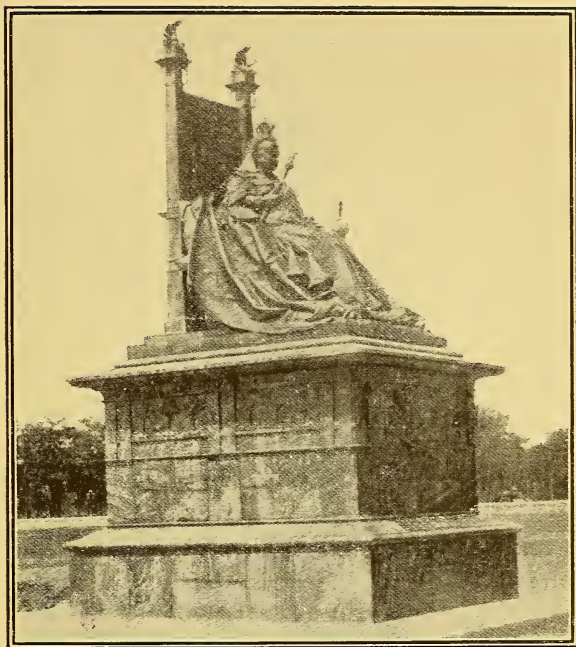
I went out, and squandered a rupee, an hour, on the finest turnout, at the stand, and forgot that I was paying too much.

I drove to Government House, where great preparations were being made for the arrival of Lord and Lady Curzon, and for the grand ball they were to give later.

The ball room is magnificent; the floor is of polished teak wood, the ceilings are beautifully paneled, the chandeliers are brilliant with their sparkling, shimmering glass pendants (they are said to have been taken from a French ship during the last war between France and England).

Government House stands in a small park of six acres, with well kept lawn and beautiful trees and flowers.

The Indian museum is an immense building, containing a fine collection of fossils and minerals, a geological gallery, with rich specimens and a fine library, and those who desire to study the products, and manufactures of the country, will find the finest examples



QUEEN VICTORIA

of their art, and workmanship, in the economical division.

In 1891, Calcutta was a city of 840,000 inhabitants, including the suburbs; in the heart of this great city is the Maiden or Esplanade, which is a mag-

nificent open space, a mile and a half long, by about a quarter of a mile in width.

It is not like a park, for it is treeless, there are no drives or anything to beautify this great level piece of land, except that around it are many statues, Queen Victoria in bronze, seated on a massive base, occupying the most conspicuous place.

The temples, at least the one I visited, three miles away near the bank of the river Ganges, was disappointing. The approach was disgustingly unclean and wet from the dripping clothes of the bathers, who crowded and jostled me in the very narrow alleys, by which we struggled to see the temple.

We were accosted every moment by beggars in priest's garb, who held out their skinny hands; I suppose they were clean after the constant bathing, but they did not look so.

When we finally reached the temple, we could see nothing, it was so shut in by other buildings, and so dark. We were never allowed to enter these temples, but the guide would point to a barred window and ask if we could see the god inside, but I never could!

And for this, four of us were beguiled by my servant to waste a whole afternoon.

I visited the palace of the dethroned King of Oudh, but was not much impressed with its grandeur, though the many fine portraits were interesting.



THE NEW POST OFFICE

I had always read and heard so much of the Black Hole of Calcutta, that I expected to look down into a deep black hole, but on this famous spot, now stands the new Post Office.

I was satiated with sight-seeing, I just wanted to enjoy the delicious air and the beautiful sunshine.

So for days before embarking for Hongkong, via Rangoon and Singapore, I drove and dawdled, shopping a little, visiting the flower market, which was most interesting, watching the street scenes, and finally departed from Calcutta with sadness and regret.

(C'est-Finis)

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